

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 PANAMA 01109 151919Z

ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05
SAB-02 L-01 CIAE-00 SIL-01 EB-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 PRS-01
/040 W
-----151932Z 052089 /43

P 151745Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 737

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PANAMA 1109

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, PN, PQ,

SUBJECT: RISE AND APPARENT FALL OF CANAL ZONE LABOR-TORRIJOS DIALOG

REF: PANAMA 0950

SUMMARY: GOP-GUIDED PANAMIAN MEDIA GREETED THE OPENING
OF DIALOG BETWEEN TORRIJOS AND US-CITIZEN LABOR LEADERS
FROM CANAL ZONE WITH CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM, BUT IT APPEARS
THAT CHANCES FOR ITS CONTINUATION HAVE BEEN JEOPARDIZED
BY INCIDENTS FEBRUARY 11-12 INVOLVING WILLIAM DRUMMOND AND OTHER
CANAL ZONE AMERICAN LABOR LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN DAYS FOLLOWING TORRIJOS' PRECEDENT-SHATTERING FEBRUARY
7 PERSONAL MEETING WITH A GROUP OF US-CITIZEN CANAL ZONE LABOR
LEADERS (REFTEL), GOP-GUIDED MEDIA COMMENTED WITH CAUTIOUS
OPTIMISM. "REPUBLICA" FOR FEBRUARY 8 CALLED THE MEETING A MATTER
OF "HICHEST IMPORTANCE" AND SAW THE "BARRIERS OF INCOMPREHENSION"
WHICH HAD DEVIDED PANAMA AND CANAL ZONE AMERICANS "BEGINNING TO
FALL". "CRITICA" FOR FEBRUARY 9 NOTED PARTICULARLY ESTABLISHMENT
BY TORRIJOS OF A HIGH-LEVEL COMMISSION TO CONTINUE THE DIALOG:
"THIS LEAVES THE WAY OPEN FOR NONE IN THE CANAL ZONE TO HAVE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 PANAMA 01109 151919Z

IMAGINARY APPREHENSIONS ABOUT WHAT WILL BE THE FUTURE REALITIES."

2. THE MEETING APPEARED TO GENERATE MORE SUSPICION ON THE CANAL
ZONE SIDE OF THE EQUATION. FIRST, THE TWO CANAL ZONE LOCALS OF
AFSCME, WHOSE MEMBERSHIPS ARE PREDOMINATLY PANAMIAN, WERE NOT
EVEN AWARE OF THE MEETING IN ADVANCE AND WERE ACUTELY UNHAPPY OVER
THEIR ABSENCE WHILE THE PREDOMINANTLY PANAMIAN-CITIZEN NMU--

WHICH HAD ALWAYS MAINTAINED A GREATER DISTANCE BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE GOP--WAS NOT ONLY PRESENT BUT ORGANIZED THE SESSION.

3. LOCAL 14 OF AFGE, THE LARGEST SINGLE US-CITIZEN UNION IN CANAL ZONE (MEMBERSHIP APPROACHES 1000), WAS ALSO NOT INCLUDED. THIS LOCAN RECENTLY WITHDREW FROM THE CLU-MTC DUE TO ITS FEELING THAT CLU HAD BECOME TOO EXCLUSIVELY ORIENTED TOWARD TRADES ON THE WATERWAY ITSELF, WHILE AFGE MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES LARGE NUMBERS OF WHITE-COLLAR PROFESSIONALS. BUT ITS NON-INCLUSION IN THE MEETING WAS ALSO RESENTED BY THE UNION LEADERSHIP. LOCAL 14 PRESIDENT SAID THIS REINFORCED HIS INTEREST IN HIS LONG-STANDING PROPOSAL FOR A STANDING CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM INVOLVING LABOR, MANAGEMENT AND US TREATY NEGOTIATORS, TO OBLIVIATE NEED FOR AMERICANS TO FEEL THEY MUST TURN TO GOP TO FILL THEIR INFORMATION/CONSULTATION VACUUM.

4. FINALLY, THERE WAS A FAIR AMOUNT OF SUSPICION AND RESERVE AMONG LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNIONS THAT WERE INCLUDED IN THE TORRIJOS MEETING. CLU-MTC MET FEBRUARY 10 AND DECIDED THAT IT WOULD NEITHER BARGAIN WITH NOR SEEK ANY DIRECT "DEAL" OR GUARANTEES FROM GOP, BUT WOULD AUTHORIZE ITS PRESIDENT TO ATTEND ANY MEETINGS THAT MIGHT OCCUR TO SEE WHAT GOP HAD TO SAY. CLU PRESIDENT, DESCRIBING THIS MEETING, REITERATED TO EMBASSY LABOR OFFICER DESIRE OF CLU-MTC LEADERSHIP FOR DIRECT DIALOG WITH US NEGOTIATING TEAM IN SOME MANNER, AND SAID HIS LEADERSHIP WAS QUITE DISAPPOINTED THAT USG HAD FAILED IN THIS RESPECT.

5. PANAMA CANAL PILOTS ASSOCIATION CIRCULATED A MEMO TO ITS MEMBERS FORWARDING WITHOUT COMMENT THREE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS IT SAID LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 PANAMA 01109 151919Z

WERE MADE BY TORRIJOS: 1) TO ESTABLISH A HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE FOR ONG OING MEETINGS AND TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO AMERICAN WORK FORCE ABOUT TREATY; 2) PROPOSE PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF PRESENT EMPLOYEE HOUSING, WHILE US NEGOTIATORS WANT CONTINUED RENTAL OF COMPANY-OWNED HOUSE; AND 3) COMPREHENSIVE PANAMANIAN LABOR LAW MAKING IT ILLEGAL TO CUT PAY OF US EMPLOYEE, ADVERSELY CHANGE WORKING CONDITIONS, OR TERMINATE EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT PROVIDING A SUBSTITUTE JOB. PILOTS' PRESIDENT IS OUT OF COUNTRY, BUT GENERAL MEETING ON THESE PROPOSALS WAS TO BE CALLED FEBRUARY 16.

6. HOWEVER, CHANCES FOR ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DIALOG APPEARED JEOPARDIZED BY EVENTS INVOLVING WILLIAM DRUMMOND WHICH OCCURRED FEBRUARY 11-12. NOT ONLY WAS DRUMMOND, WHO IS LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL TO CLU-MTC, DETAINED ON TWO OCCASIONS BY GOP AUTHORITIES WHILE PROCEEDING TO US "ON UNION BUSINESS", BUT A NUMBER OF OTHER CLU

-MTC

LEADERS WERE DETAINED BRIEFLY AND SEARCHED BY GOP OFFICIALS AT
TOCUMEN AIRPORT IN EARLY MORNING HQSS FEBRUARY 12. CLU-MTC MET
EVENING OF FEBRUARY 12, AND ITS PRESIDENT HAS STATED FOR
RECORD THAT HIS ORGANIZATION WILL HAVE NOTHING FURTHER TO DO WITH
ANY SORT OF DIALOG WITH GOP, SINCE GOP HAD SHOWN ITSELF READY TO
MOLEST CLU-MTC LEADERS GOING ABOUT THEIR UNION BUSINESS.

7. ATTITUDE OF REMAINDER OF US-CITIZEN LABOR LEADERS IS NOT YET
YET KNOWN. BUT HIGH GENERAL LEVEL OF ADVERSE REACTIONS IN
CANAL ZONE TO DRUMMOND INCIDENTS LEADS US TO STRONGLY SUSPECT
THAT THEY WILL TAKE SAME ATTITUDE TOWARD GOP AS THAT OF CLU-MTCM
WE ALSO ANTICIPATE RENEWED AND INCREASES CALLS FROM CANAL ZONE
LABOR LEADERS FOR SOME MECHANISM FOR DIRECT DIALOG BETWEEN
THEM AND US TREATY NEGOTIATING TEAM AS DISCUSSION OF ISSUES
AFFECTING LABOR INTERESTS PROGRESSES.

JORDEN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 PANAMA 01109 151919Z

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PANAMA01109
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770053-1211
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770240/aaaabjrp.tel
Line Count: 139
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f938cec6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 PANAMA 950
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3319363
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RISE AND APPARENT FALL OF CANAL ZONE LABOR-TORRIJOS DIALOG
TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, PN, PQ, (TORRIJOS HERRERA, OMAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f938cec6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009